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10. UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE OF FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK *DENDROCYGNA BICOLOR* (VIEILLOT 1816) AT CHILIKA LAKE¹

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We were in the northern sector of the Chilika Lake in a motor boat from Kaluparaghat to Tinimuhani (Confluence point of three tributaries of the River Mahanathi, namely Daya, Bhargavi and Nuna), around 1130 hrs, when we saw a large congregation of birds in the open water. From a distance they looked like Gadwall *Anas strepera*. But, when we reached closer, we found that they were darker than the Gadwall and the twittering sound was diagnostic. They were brownish black and had a rusty-whitish collar around the foreneck like in the Fulvous Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*; I could confirm the identity from the white band formed by the upper tail coverts in flight. Meanwhile, our boatman moved the boat closer to the flock. This congregation consisted of c. 7,250 Fulvous Whistling-Duck. The unique composition without any other species was amazing to watch. I marked the exact geographical location of the area with the help of Global Positioning System (GPS) as 19.83° N; 85.47° E. Without disturbing the flock, we moved around the congregation and determined the water depth in three places. The depth varied between 30 and 40 cm. Further south-east we observed two more flocks of c. 1,500 and 4,600 individuals each at 19.83° N; 85.47° E and 19.83° N; 85.48° E respectively. These, however were mixed flocks; the other duck species in the flock were, Gadwall *Anas strepera*, Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*, Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*, and Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*.

Ali and Ripley (1983) mention the Fulvous Whistling-Duck as a resident and nomadic species which breeds in Bengal, usually less common than the Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*, and occurs in smaller flocks. But the sighting of 7,250 birds in a single flock similar to other dabbling and diving ducks is a rare phenomenon for this species. However, such a congregation of the Fulvous Whistling-duck was never observed thereafter. Altogether the total number observed (14,490) was over 70% of its geographical population as per the estimates given by the Wetlands International (2002).

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11. COMMENTS ON THE REVIEW BY ASAD RAHMANI, ON 'HANDBOOK ON INDIAN WETLAND BIRDS AND THEIR CONSERVATION'¹

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While reviewing the 'HANDBOOK ON INDIAN WETLAND BIRDS AND THEIR CONSERVATION' by Kumar *et al.* (2005), published by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), the reviewer commented, "unfortunately the ZSI is also famous for bringing out boring tomes, full of jargon and technical descriptions of new species which interest only the subject experts. This is now changing, thanks to the book brought out by Dr. Arun Kumar and his team" (Rahmani 2005).

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, the word 'tome' means a large heavy book, especially scholarly or serious one. A scholarly or serious book becomes boring only to the illiterate ignorant. Obviously, it is to the interest of subject experts only.

As rightly pointed out by the reviewer, the mandate of ZSI is to document the animal diversity of the country. In the Convention on Biodiversity of 1992, and later in several new global agreements, the message of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity has been on the prime agenda.

The sole reference system for biodiversity interpretation is catered by the science of Taxonomy (Narendran 2006). Faunal documentation, including describing new species, as practiced by ZSI has to follow the principles of taxonomy using the technical or specialized words particular to that branch of science. Every branch of science uses its own recognized terminologies, however difficult it may be for others to understand.

If the taxonomic descriptions are boring to the reviewer, being the Executive Editor of the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, why the reviewer provides a section called New Descriptions in his *Journal* that uses only the taxonomic jargon? Obviously, it is to the interest of subject experts only.

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12. FOOD AND FEEDING HABITS OF THE GREEN TURTLE *CHELONIA MYDAS* IN RELATION TO MARINE PLANTS IN THE GULF OF MANNAR BIOSPHERE RESERVE, INDIA¹

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Introduction

Green turtles are the most abundant sea turtles in the Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay (Deraniyagala 1939; Kuriyan

1950; Carr 1953; Jones and Fernando 1968; Agastheesapillai and Thiagarajan 1979; Bhupathy and Saravanam 2001), they are primarily herbivores, feeding on a variety of marine algae